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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 08, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 08, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

ZAMAN / BOLGE / EKSREPES: Abdullah Dogru, chairperson of AKP Adana party organization, withdrew from chairmanship race hours before the election time upon reported instructions from PM Erdogan who was in Adana over the weekend. From among two candidates who ran for chairmanship, Mustafa Attaroglu, who was reportedly endorsed by the party center, won by receiving 398 votes out of 643 delegates. Dogru gave messages of solidarity following the contest. (This summary is from 05/07 editions.)

SABAH (GUNEY) / BOLGE / EKSPRES: AKP Adana provincial congress winner Attorney Mustafa Attaroglu, who was reportedly being backed by Seyhan and Yuregir district delegates, said that nobody lost the race in the run for chairmanship. Meanwhile, Ekspres daily noted that many AKP delegates criticized lack of democratic processes within the party upon PM Erdogan's orders for Abdullah Dogru to withdraw from the race before the party election.

BOLGE: Cukurova Journalists Association condemned the bomb attack carried out on the premises of Cumhuriyet daily in Istanbul.

ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM: First hearing of the trial of defendants of Semdinli case lasted for two days. Defendants Ali Kaya and Ozcan Ildeniz claimed that they had no connection with the bombing of the bookstore in Semdinli on November 9. During the hearing, as the third defendant Veysel Ates's (PKK defector) statement would be taken following the statements given by two defendants, the claimant's attorneys demanded that the other defendants be taken out of the courtroom since Ates was their junior officer. The defendants' attorneys demanded that claimant Seferi Yilmaz (bookstore owner) also be taken out of the courtroom. The court then ordered that those three people be taken out of the room during Veysel Ates's statements. Court jurors overturned the demand of intervening attorneys to take nine civilian Jandarma officials out of the courtroom. At the end of the hearing, the court decided that the defendants stay under arrest and the court be adjourned to June 1. (This summary is from 05/07 editions.)

OZGUR GUNDEM: June 1 trial of the Semdinli case will reportedly hear the statements of owner of the bookstore which was bombed on November 9 last year. Esat Canan, Hakkari deputy from CHP, and Diyarbakir businessman Mehmet Ali Altindag will testify as witnesses as well. The court officials will then read the statements of 37 witnesses from Hakkari. It is also

expected the information the court solicited from Jandarma National Command about all rewards, prizes and certificates granted to the defendants will be received by the court by June 11. One of the attorneys told the daily that the pressure on the court could be intensified in the coming days, since the court did not release the defendants.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: The dailies criticized PM Erdogan for saying nothing about resolving the Kurdish issue during his visit to Diyarbakir on Sunday (05/07) which sharply contrasted his visit 9 months ago to the province. Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir welcomed the premier at the airport, but did not attend Erdogan's party congress despite being invited. Erdogan went to the party congress in Siirt following his tour to Diyarbakir.

RADIKAL / CUMHURIYET / SABAH: Radikal daily pointed out that PM Erdogan did not use the contentious term "Kurdish issue" during his address to people in Diyarbakir as compared to his former address last year in August. Cumhuriyet daily quoted Erdogan as saying that his remarks uttered following the violent riots in Diyarbakir were abused and misinterpreted by certain circles. (Note: Erdogan was sharply criticized when he said then that the security forces would intervene even if the demonstrators were children or women. End Note.) Radikal daily added that Diyarbakir district mayors were not allowed at the airport to welcome the premier because their names were not included in the list.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Diyarbakir police reportedly conducted a raid on a house of a person whose brother was arrested during the violent riots at the end of March in Diyarbakir. The person's brother was a chairperson of Diyarbakir Branch of Tum Bel Sen (Union of Municipality Employees). Police seized books and journals about Tum Bel Sen found at the house.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Members of the Human Rights

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Association's Hakkari branch, while condemning the bomb attack on a school bus in Hakkari, pointed out a possible coincidence between the timing of the bombing of the school bus and the start of Semdinli trial.

YENI SAFAK: Two children, who were victims of a bomb attack on a school bus in Hakkari five days ago, have been discharged from hospital.

ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM: Thousands of people held a rally called 'No to Terrorism' in Hakkari to condemn the terrorist attack carried out on a school bus in Hakkari three days ago. Ozgur Gundem claims that this rally was mostly backed by military circles, police and village guards. (This summary is from 05/07 editions.)

OZGUR GUNDEM / SABAH: An inmate at a jail in Malatya has been penalized with a 13-day confinement in a prison cell on charges of referring to Abdullah Ocalan with a courtesy title in Turkish in a letter that demanded the prisoner's transfer from the Malatya jail to the Imrali prison where Ocalan was being kept. Sabah daily in contrast reported seven inmates being punished by reading books for two months in the library on the same charges.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / SABAH (GUNEY): Rifat Hisarciklioglu, Chairperson of TOBB (Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchange), attended an informative meeting for businessman in Bitlis's Tatvan district. Sabah's Guney supplement reported Hisarciklioglu as paying a visit to Mus and announcing that Eastern Anatolia Regional Meeting of TOBB would be held in Mus in June or July.

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